

THE MAN FROM CIA

CPYRGHT



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Red Raborn is a demanding old sea dog—and as the new U. S. spy boss, he runs a fast ship on the dark waters of international espionage

By BILL SURFACE

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WILLIAM (RED) RABORN is a short, barrel-chested admiral with a florid face and a flair for getting one man to do the work of four.

As the new director of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, the world's most extensive spy network, he probably is driving himself and his men harder than anybody else in Washington.

One Naval officer recalls: "After hearing Raborn talk, I knew I was ready to die for someone, but I didn't know or remember whether it was for the admiral, the President, my mother, the head of the Boy Scouts, or whom—but, brother, I was ready to die!"

If Raborn is rough and demanding with his men, he has reasons. America's security heavily depends upon the agents he supervises. As long as the Communists seek to control the world, the CIA *must* penetrate closed areas and secretly ferret out strategic plans in advance.

Raborn has a huge, incredibly complex organization to run. His espionage network includes "black" agents of many nationalities working in legitimate businesses in Berlin, Istanbul, Hong Kong, and even Moscow and Peking. It also includes persons in strategic positions in Communist governments who are spying for the CIA. In addition, he supervises intelligence specialists operating from overseas diplomatic offices and some 15,000 persons who work at the CIA's immense headquarters amid 140,000 acres at Langley, Va.

The 60-year-old CIA boss himself works from

a seventh-floor office in Langley, which, daily receives some 2,000 coded messages and micro-filmed documents, many recordings of bugged telephone conversations, and miles of undeveloped film taken by U-2 planes and concealed cameras. In addition, some 1,000 nonsecret items such as Communist political journals arrive each day and are instantly translated by computers, then analyzed and cross-checked with some of the CIA's 50 million documents.

From this avalanche of information, Raborn and his top aides may, in the course of one day, figure out some of the Communists' potential moves in Korea or North Vietnam, decide whether a rabble rouser in Thailand is a Communist, and determine the progress of a number of CIA-subsidized undergrounds in sabotaging Communist plots. Such information is summarized on five typed pages that are inserted into a black loose-leaf notebook labeled "Confidential: for the President's Eyes Only" and delivered before 6 p.m. each day to the White House.

Simultaneously, Raborn must collate all U.S. intelligence and issue to the State and Defense Departments a separate daily intelligence digest. The digest may include such information as a report that a barn with cows grazing outside in Nam Tha, North Vietnam, is a disguised arsenal. These items are used in compiling the weekly list of targets to be bombed.

When President Johnson considers escalation in the Vietnamese war, Raborn has the job of estimating Red China's and Russia's possible reactions to U.S. moves. The evaluation must be

supported with details about Communist strength. Even the most minute facts may be important. Approved For Release 2000/08/03 : CIA-RDP75-00001R000100100026-8
ment's Soviet affairs desk called Raborn's office for background on the manager of a Russian factory. Shortly afterward, he received a report which noted, among other things, that the Russian, who was married, secretly had a girl friend who had dyed her hair three different colors in the past 19 months.

This indexed information on minor figures is sometimes invaluable during fast-breaking events such as a coup in a South American or Asian country. After his staff determines whether any key rebels are Communists, Raborn telephones either the White House's subbasement situation room or, in potentially explosive situations, the President himself.

When Communists seize control of a government and the President authorizes the CIA to take action, Raborn sits down with Richard Helm, the CIA's crewcut deputy director for plans (plans is a diplomatic word for cloak-and-dagger work), and arranges discreetly to supply guerrilla armies. CIA successes (the agency has overthrown Red regimes in Guatemala and Iran) cannot be boasted about. But failures, as the world learned at Cuba's Bay of Pigs, usually are well advertised by America's enemies.

Raborn, however, is not the kind of man to tolerate failure. As the second oldest of eight children reared in Marlow, Okla., he swore he wouldn't abandon his goal of becoming a Naval aviator—even after failing his eye test. He argued so vehemently that the examiner's vision might not be 20-20 that he was allowed to repeat the test—and passed.

Later, as a gunnery officer at Kaneohe, Hawaii, Raborn insisted upon keeping his squadron's fighter planes gassed and armed. Consequently these were the only planes to get into the air during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

Raborn excels under pressure. During World War II, he was an officer on the carrier *USS Hancock* when a kamikaze plane ripped a hole in the deck. Amid blinding smoke, Raborn supervised the fire-fighting and damage-control units that repaired the hole, pushing his men so hard that planes on a bombing mission were able to land safely only a short while later.

In 1955 he was the skipper of the *USS Bennington* when an explosion engulfed both decks, killing 103 and injuring 117. Raborn did not abandon ship, as suggested. Instead, he radioed for helicopters to evacuate the injured, then helped extinguish the blaze and brought the limping carrier into port.

Soon afterward, Raborn was summoned to the Pentagon office of Admiral Arleigh Burke, chief of Naval operations, and delegated unprecedented responsibility: the development of a submarine that could fire ballistic missiles 1,500 nautical miles while totally submerged. This would mean that, even if every U.S. missile base were destroyed, a submarine could continue to fire nuclear warheads.

Raborn quickly immersed himself in the project. Approved For Release 2000/08/03 : CIA-RDP75-00001R000100100026-8
Even agency heads were complaining that the

peppery admiral was stealing their best men. He assembled a 500-man staff and put it on a seven-plant, prodding workers and contractors into putting out more work and warning that delays could damage their reputation. When test missiles malfunctioned, Raborn was always there, demanding reasons why they did.

Finally the submarine *George Washington* descended 40 feet and fired the first undersea missile, the *Polaris*, and the grinning admiral radioed the White House: "POLARIS FROM OUT OF DEEP TO TARGET, PERFECT." Amazingly, Raborn had pushed through *Polaris*' development *three years ahead of schedule!*

Congress and the White House were impressed by the tough, balding admiral's ability to finish a difficult job. Last April, President Johnson chose Raborn to replace John McCone as CIA boss and invited him to the LBJ ranch.

There Raborn showed he had one of the basic prerequisites for the job—the ability to keep a secret. Reporters at the ranch asked him, "Are you Admiral Raborn, and is the rumor of your CIA appointment true?" The jaunty old sea dog replied, "I haven't heard a thing about it."

That perhaps was Raborn's last public statement. A sign in CIA headquarters reads: "No Comment' Is Our Only Comment." Raborn avoids reporters or any kind of notoriety. Shortly after his appointment, he and his attractive brunette wife were invited to a White House party. But the guest list deliberately omitted the Raborns' name. (Britain's intelligence chief also cannot speak publicly and is known only as M-1.)

Raborn is married to an ex-Navy nurse, and he can thank his own aggressiveness for meeting her. Once, when he was still a captain and his ship was docked near New York, he decided that he and his 22 officers needed entertainment. He drove to a USO and arranged for a dance which would be attended by 22 nurses.

Arriving at the dance, Raborn was exasperated to find the officers and nurses standing on opposite sides of the room. His sunburned face seemed to turn a deeper red as he roared: "Only reason you're here is to meet these pretty little ladies, and everybody's practically standing at attention. I'm ordering each officer to march over to these ladies, give his name, and then socialize."

Raborn led the procession and found himself talking to the chief nurse, Commander Mildred Terrill. They subsequently were married in one of the four weddings that resulted from the USO dance.

Occasionally, Raborn finds time to spend a day at home relaxing with Mildred. He sometimes sits at his electric organ and plays by ear such numbers as "The Yellow Rose of Texas." Recently he quit golf to raise a Japanese-style rose garden. He also has trained his dachshund Heinz to stand on his hind legs and salute when he hears the word, "Navy," and bow and cover his eyes in shame at the sound of "Army." Nobody knows what Heinz does when he hears "CIA."

"But," quips an acquaintance, "it wouldn't surprise me if Red had taught Heinz how to do a little spying." ♦